U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Alpena FRO Accomplishment Report

Aquatic Species Conservation and Management

Michigan Islands National Wildlife Refuge Survey


Photo credit: Aaron Woldt, USFWS

During the month of August, Fishery Biologists Scott Koproski, Jerry McClain, Susan Wells, Anjanette Bowen, Aaron Woldt, and Adam Kowalski completed a Michigan Islands National Wildlife Refuge fishery gill net survey. Biologist Koproski received funding through the Service's Challenge Grant Program to obtain fishery data on four islands located in Thunder Bay, Lake Huron. This is a cooperative project between the Michigan DNR and the Service. The Service sampled 3 islands, and MDNR sampled one island.

Two of the four islands sampled are part of the Michigan Islands NWR. However, all four islands are important to coastal fish species and recreational fishing opportunities in the Thunder Bay area. These islands provide important feeding, spawning, and nursery habitat for a variety of fish species, but the status of these populations is unknown. The goal of this study was to obtain baseline data to monitor future trends in these populations caused by disturbances like habitat alteration, exotic species, and cormorant predation.

Alpena FRO staff set two to four 1,000' variable mesh gill net gangs on each of three islands for a total of 8,000' of effort. This project was postponed from earlier in the field season due to the presence of algae in Thunder Bay which clung to the nets and reduced catch rates significantly. By August, the bay was algae free.

A variety of game and non-game fish were collected during the survey. The high number of fish species encountered illustrates the importance of the habitat provided by the Michigan Island Refuges in maintaining species diversity. All species encountered were measured to the nearest millimeter and weighed to the nearest gram. Additionally, aging structures were removed from game fish and stomach contents were recorded from all piscivores.

This project is another example of Alpena FRO's commitment to the following Fishery Vision Priorities: "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management", "Public Use", and "Partnerships and Accountability".

Scott Koproski

Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management

Surveying on the Severance

On August 25th Biologists Wells and Rawlings along with SCEP student Andrea Gray surveyed a fish passage project on Severance Creek in Antrim County, Michigan that was funded under the 2005 Fish Passage Program. Severance Creek is a tributary to the Jordan River, which is a state designated trout stream and has been classified as a Natural and Scenic River. The site contains a perched culvert that prohibits any fish movement into the upper stretches of the system.


Photo credit: Susan Wells, USFWS

During the survey, photos were taken below and above the culvert for later use in before/after comparisons. The gradient was measured and substrate classified. Length measurements were taken between reaches above the culvert where pooling has occurred. Vegetative growth was heavy and prohibited a full longitudinal profile of the stream. The Antrim County Road Commission will be replacing the perched culvert with a bottomless structure in late fall and post construction surveys will be conducted in spring of 2006 to document any changes.

This is an example of collaboration between government and non-profit organizations, including the Conservation Reserve Alliance, to enhance aquatic habitat which will benefit fish and wildlife resources. This project enhances fish passage of native brook trout within the Jordan River watershed. The project involves collaboration between many partners and addresses the Service's Fishery Program Vision for the Future priority of "Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management" and "Partnerships and Accountability."

Susan Wells

Tour of Black River Large Woody Debris Placement Work

The student work crews for the Black River and Thunder Bay River watersheds were both coordinated out of the Montmorency Conservation District Office in Atlanta, MI for the summer of 2005. One crew chief led both work crews. On August 26 representatives from the Conservation District Office, Canada Creek Ranch, District Office board members, and Heather Rawlings from the Alpena FRO toured reaches of the Upper Black River where the work


Photo credit: Heather Rawlings, USFWS

crews placed large woody debris (LWD) in the river to improve fisheries habitat, and to remove sediment from the river channel. Approximately 5 river-miles were improved with the placement of these structures. Roughly 95% of the structures were properly placed, and we believe will benefit the watershed. A small number of the structures required minor modifications, and will be corrected this fall.

Native brook trout are the dominate fish in this coldwater ecosystem, and are the primary species that will benefit from this in-stream work. The Alpena FRO has been providing funding and technical assistance to the Black River and Thunder Bay River watersheds since 1998.

Five river-miles of the Black River were improved by the placement of large woody debris. The wood provides structure and cover for the native population of brook trout that dominates the aquatic ecosystem. Completion of aquatic habitat restoration projects contribute toward the "Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management" component of the Service's Fishery Program Vision for the Future.

Heather Rawlings

The Little Ocqueoc Profile

On August 31st Biologist Wells and personnel from Huron Pines RC&D surveyed a fish passage project on the Little Ocqueoc Creek in Presque Isle County, Michigan that was funded under the 2005 Fish Passage Program. The Little Ocqueoc is a tributary to the Ocqueoc River, which is a state designated blue ribbon trout stream. The site contains twin perched culverts that prohibits fish movement into the upper stretches of the system.

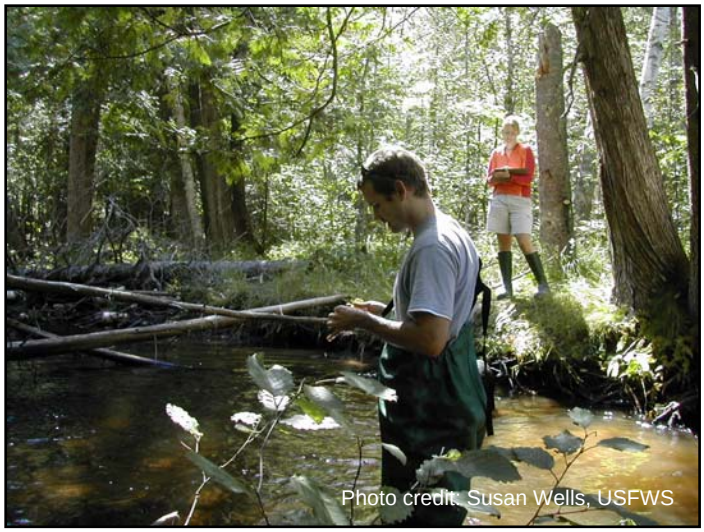
Photo credit: Susan Wells, USFWS

A full longitudinal profile was conducted encompassing 500 feet of stream reach. A comprehensive pebble count was also conducted to document substrate above and below the structure. Kris Bruestle from Huron Pines RC&D compiled the information into a program which drew the profile and calculated the dominate substrate. This survey will be duplicated right after the culverts are replaced with a bottomless structure by the Presque Isle County Road Commission this fall and again one year from the completed date. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has provided historical fishery data for this area and has plans to return to this site for a fishery assessment within the next two years. The fishery data combined with the morphological data will provide a comprehensive look at changes in the morphology and biology of system before and after a restoration project has occurred.

This is an example of collaboration between government and non-profit organizations, including Huron Pines RC&D, to enhance aquatic habitat which will benefit fish and wildlife resources. This project enhances fish passage of native brook trout within the Ocqueoc River watershed. The

project involves collaboration between many partners and addresses the Service's Fishery Program Vision for the Future priority of "Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management" and "Partnerships and Accountability".

Susan Wells

Partnerships and Accountability

More Shipwrecks found During Side-Scan Sonar Work in the North Channel of the St. Clair River

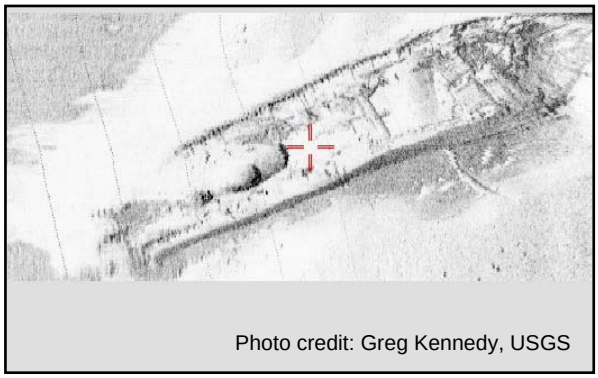

Photo credit: Greg Kennedy, USGS

While mapping the North Channel of the St. Clair River, Biologist from Alpena FRO and USGS Great Lakes Science Center (GLSC) in Ann Arbor Michigan discovered a Great Lakes shipwreck. The side-scan research taking place in the North Channel during the summer of 2005 is part of a collaborative effort between Alpena FRO and its partners to better understand the habitat needs of lake sturgeon in the Great Lakes.

Since 1996 Alpena FRO, GLSC, Michigan DNR Lake St. Clair Research Station, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and a number of non-governmental organizations have conducted a number of lake sturgeon research projects in the waterways connecting lakes Huron and Erie. During that time period information derived from mark-recapture and telemetry studies have indicated that the North Channel provides some yet identified habitat component that is important for lake sturgeon survival. In the headwaters region of the St. Clair River shipwrecks were identified as important refuge areas for spawning sturgeon providing breaks in the water current.

In 2004 Alpena FRO and its partners completed a lake sturgeon telemetry project studying the movement patterns of juvenile (less than 30") lake sturgeon in the North Channel. Preliminary results from the side-scan mapping indicate that the location where the shipwreck was recently discovered falls within the home range of a number of the fish studied in 2004. Although the discovery of the shipwreck is an important piece of the research puzzle our primary goal is to map the entire North Channel and define all of the habitat differences within the channel. What is not fully understood about the population of lake sturgeon that remain in the North Channel year round is what foods are available, and seasonal and diel habitat preferences.

After nearly a decade of research conducting telemetry and mark-recapture studies no lake sturgeon have been found in waters less than 25 feet in the St. Clair River. Interestingly, the most diverse and productive invertebrate populations are found in the shallowest areas of the river and yet lake sturgeon have never been documented as using those areas of the river. Preliminary results of the side-scan work indicate that lake sturgeon of all sizes are found over sand or hard-pan clay habitats in the North Channel. Completion of this project should help clarify important habitats needed for the survival of lake sturgeon in this part of the Great Lakes.

This joint research project provided an excellent opportunity to interact with biologists from other agencies and to explain the Service's mission and efforts to manage fishery resources in the Great Lakes. Specifically, information was provided about the efforts of the Service and its partners to rehabilitate native lake sturgeon populations in the Great Lakes and the role that the Fishery Resources Offices have in this endeavor. This research event supports the “Partnerships and Accountability” and “Aquatic Species Conservation and Management” priorities of the Fishery Program’s Vision for the Future.

James Boase

Local Anglers Assist with Lake Sturgeon Diet Study

Using funding from DTE Energy, Biologists from Alpena FRO and Michigan DNR Lake St. Clair Research Station teamed up to study the diet of lake sturgeon captured in the North Channel of the St. Clair River. The study was designed as a pilot project to help researchers get a better understanding of what foods make up lake sturgeon diet in this system. Although many lake sturgeon have been collected in the St. Clair River, to date no diet information had been collected.

What biologists have been able to piece together from recent research is that lake sturgeon reside in the St. Clair River year round and the areas of the river that they occupy are composed primarily of sand and hard-pan clay. Collection of benthic samples in those same areas revealed that very few aquatic organisms live there with the exception of zebra mussels. Lake sturgeon are considered opportunistic feeders meaning that they will consume a wide variety of diet items. The purpose of this pilot project was to determine if lake sturgeon were taking advantage of the abundance of zebra mussels found in the system.

In the past lake sturgeon were captured in the St. Clair River on setlines that were fished over a 24 hour period. No diet information could be collected from those fish because during that 24 hour period most of the food items get digested. To avoid those problems this study solicited the help of local recreational anglers to capture lake sturgeon using hook and line and as soon as a fish was landed researchers were on hand to pump the stomach and collect diet information.

The study was originally proposed to take place over two weekends during the month of July. The fist date was scheduled on July 16th, the opening day of lake sturgeon fishing for Michigan waters, but was canceled due to foul weather. The second weekend was July 29th and 30th, with six boats fishing each evening. A total of seven lake sturgeon were collected during the two nights of fishing with the fish ranging in size from 28 to 53 inches.

The six boats helping with the study were fishing at various locations along the ten mile length of the North Channel. When a fish was hooked and landed the boat captains would notify the research boat for transfer of the fish. Once the fish was transferred to the research boat information about the fish was collected including; length, weight, girth, fin ray (for age and genetics), and then the fish would get tagged with both an internal and an external marker. Diet information was obtained by first placing the fish in a large plastic tub, inserting a small pliable plastic hose down the gullet of the fish and flushing the stomach contents with water.

All anglers participating in the project received specialty ball-caps made up for the event. The event was covered by the media with articles appearing in various local news papers (http://www.mlive.com/sports/statewide/index.ssf?/base/sports-0/112423020764270.xml&coll=1) during the month of August. Following the event participants were asked to participate in the Michigan DNR Angler Diary Program. The Diary Program is an effective tool used by the Michigan DNR to collect information that should provide valuable insight about lake sturgeon residing in the North Channel.

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James Boase

New Sampling Gear Used to Collect Lake Sturgeon in the St. Clair River

With funding provided by DTE Energy, Biologists from Alpena FRO and Michigan DNR Lake St. Clair Research Station purchased and tested trammel nets in the St. Clair River. Trammel nets have been successfully used by commercial fishers and biologists in large rivers like the Mississippi and Missouri. They have been used for many years to capture, virtually unharmed, a wide variety of species and sizes of fish.

Photo credit: Bruce Manny, USGS

Trammel nets can best be described as a small mesh gill net sandwiched between two large mesh gill nets. However, unlike gill nets trammel nets do not typically gill the fish instead the fish get caught in a pocket that is formed by the smaller inner mesh as they try to swim through. The trammel nets we used had a one inch inner mesh surrounded by eight inch outer panels. The nets can be fished in a number of ways such as anchoring or allowing the nets to drift

with the current. Researchers on the large rivers have had the best results by drift fishing the nets along river bottoms. One of the hazards fishing the nets in that fashion is that they are prone to snagging debris along the river bottom.

The goal of this demonstration effort was to collect juvenile lake sturgeon that were less than three years old. During the past decade efforts to collect young sturgeon in the St. Clair River have utilized setlines with smaller hooks. After nine years of sampling less than 25 juvenile lake sturgeon have been captured with no young-of-year lake sturgeon captured.

Our first attempt at sampling using the trammel nets focused on areas where juvenile lake sturgeon have been captured in the past. After a day of sampling and approximately 15 attempted transects we managed to capture only one large lake sturgeon. Some of our results can be explained by the number of snags that were encountered. The longest distance that the nets traveled before hooking a snag was only 200 meters and in approximately half of the transects we encountered large numbers of zebra mussels which resulted in fouled nets. Another possible explanation may be a function of the clarity of the water. The North Channel of the St. Clair River has a higher relative clarity than would be expected in systems like the Mississippi or Missouri Rivers and as a result the fish may simply be swimming away from the nets to avoid them.

In August researchers from Alpena FRO and USGS Great Lakes Science Center (GLSC) were able to use Side-scan sonar to map the North Channel. That information has provided some insight on the best locations where the nets can be deployed with minimal chances of getting snagged. Our future efforts will focus on those locations of the river.

This sampling effort allowed researchers from various agencies to share information about different sampling techniques. Our goal is to continue working with our partners from the GLSC, Michigan DNR, along with corporate sponsors, we plan to continue to test new sampling techniques in our effort to better understand the basic habitat needs of lake sturgeon in this system.

This joint research project provided an excellent opportunity to interact with biologists from other agencies and to explain the Service's mission and efforts to manage resources in the Great Lakes. Specifically, information was provided about the efforts of the Service and its partners to rehabilitate native lake sturgeon populations in the Great Lakes and the role that the Fishery Resources Offices have in this endeavor. This research event supports the “Partnerships and Accountability” and “Aquatic Species Conservation and Management” priorities of the Fishery Program’s Vision for the Future.

James Boase

Service Tours Lake Huron Shoreline Property Being Considered for Preservation

Alpena FRO Project Leader McClain participated in an August 10 tour of a 680 acre tract of land bordering Lake Huron’s Thunder Bay. The tour was sponsored by the property owner and included invited participation from federal, state, local and NGO parties with potential interest in purchase for conservation. Also participating in the tour were representatives from NOAA’s Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, Michigan DNR, Michigan DEQ, The Nature Conservancy, National Audubon Society, Alpena County and Alpena Township, as well as

District Aid for U.S Senator Carl Levin and staff from local State Representative Matt Gillard's office.

With the exception of the shoreline habitat, most of the property is densely forested with limited access or development. No survey of the flora and fauna has been completed as the property has been closed to all but private hunting access. Follow-up discussion will take place between the State of Michigan and The Nature Conservancy who showed some interest in acquiring the property for preservation.

Participation in multi-jurisdictional planning events such as this are important to promote the Service's natural resource conservation interests and efforts. This activity is consistent with and supportive of the "Partnerships and Accountability" and "Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management" priorities of the Service's Fishery Program Vision for the Future.

Jerry McClain

DTE Energy Hosts Dinner Party at Purdy Fisheries


Photo credit: James Boase, USFWS

Lake sturgeon research was highlighted at a dinner party sponsored by DTE Energy and hosted by Purdy Fisheries. The dinner was held on August 23rd in Point Edward Ontario near the site of one of the largest lake sturgeon spawning grounds in the Great Lakes. Approximately 50 employees and their families from DTE Energy attended the dinner. Fishery Biologists James Boase from Alpena FRO and Bruce Manny from USGS Great Lakes Science Center (GLSC) were guest speakers at the dinner.

The Purdy facility has multiple venues for viewing live lake sturgeon. The outdoor dining area is situated along the banks of the St. Clair River. Within the dining area is a 12,000 gallon aquarium that houses representatives of the local fish community including lake sturgeon. While guests were treated to fresh caught lake trout, walleye and perch for dinner, Boase and Manny presented information about current and past sturgeon research taking place in the St. Clair River. Following dinner guests were taken to the fish raceways housed within the Purdy facility for an opportunity to handle live lake sturgeon. For most guests this was the highlight of the evening.

Alpena FRO, GLSC, Michigan DNR, and DTE Energy have collaborated on a number of pilot projects including telemetry projects in Lake St. Clair, the Detroit River and southern Lake Huron. Findings from those pilot projects led to similar larger studies that ultimately led to the discovery of three lake sturgeon spawning sites in the St. Clair and Detroit rivers. In 2005 DTE funded two new pilot projects, one project is seeking to understand the diet of resident lake sturgeon in the North Channel of the St. Clair River while another project is directed at finding young-of-year lake sturgeon. This event provided an excellent opportunity for Alpena FRO to highlight the

continued spirit of cooperation between the Service and its partners towards the rehabilitation of lake sturgeon in the Great Lakes.

This event provided an opportunity to interact with biologists from other agencies and to explain the Service's mission and efforts to manage resources in the Great Lakes. Specifically, information was provided about the efforts of the Service and its partners to rehabilitate native lake sturgeon populations in the Great Lakes and the role that the Fishery Resources Offices have in this endeavor. This research event supports the "Partnerships and Accountability" and "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management" priorities of the Fishery Program's Vision for the Future.

James Boase

Eurasian Ruffe Genetic Samples Collected for The University of Toledo

Alpena FRO collected genetics samples from invasive Eurasian ruffe (ruffe) for a study being conducted by Dr. Carol Stepien at The University of Toledo in Ohio. Dr. Stepien is studying the genetic diversity between invasive species captured from the Great Lakes and their Eurasian source populations in an effort to provide a diagnostic tool for invasive species risk assessment.

Photo credit: Anjanette Bowen, USFWS

Alpena FRO removed pectoral fins from frozen ruffe collected in past years. Genetic information will be extracted from the fins. DNA sequences from this Great Lakes population will be compared to DNA sequences from native populations. The genetic variability will be used to determine risk assessment.

This project is consistent with the "Partnerships and Accountability" and "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management" priorities of the Fishery Program's Vision for the Future.

Anjanette Bowen

Public Use

Asian Carp Presentation Provided For Inland Seas Seminar Series

On August 2, Inland Seas Education Association (ISEA) hosted a presentation on "Asian Carp - A Threat to the Great Lakes" by Anjanette Bowen as a part of their 2005 Seminar Series held in Traverse City, Michigan.

Asian carp refer to four carp species that were intentionally introduced from Asia into captivity in the US to control molluscs, plankton, and

vegetation at aquaculture facilities. The carp escaped captivity, in many cases due to high water, and are present in stretches of the Mississippi River drainage. Within the Mississippi the carp have reduced biodiversity of fish and threaten native mollusks. They also have been a hazard to water users. The distribution of Asian carp has been spreading upstream toward the Great Lakes.

Rising concern has been expressed about the effects Asian carp may have on the food web and other areas within the Great Lakes should they become established.

The PowerPoint presentation provided information on Asian carp introduction and history in the US, identification, food preferences, behavior, and current and potential range of expansion within North America. It also provided information on attempts to prevent the movement of Asian carp into the Great Lakes through use of the Dispersal Barrier Project in the Chicago Ship and Sanitary Canal.

Public education is an important effort to reduce or prevent the spread of invasive species. This project coincides with the "Public Use" priority of the Fishery Program's Vision for the Future.

Anjanette Bowen

Cooperation with Native Americans

Alpena FRO Conducts 2005 Fishery Independent Lake Whitefish Survey in Northern Lake Huron

From July 11 to August 30, 2005 staff from the Alpena Fisheries Resource Office (FRO) conducted a fishery independent lake whitefish survey in 1836 Treaty waters of northern Lake Huron. Staff involved included Treaty Unit Coordinator Aaron Woldt, Fishery Biologists Adam Kowalski, Scott Koproski, Susan Wells, Anjie Bowen, and James Boase, and Project Leader Jerry McClain. The goal of this survey was to collect fishery independent abundance and biological data of lake whitefish stocks in treaty waters for use in statistical-catch-at-age (SCAA) population models that are updated annually to determine harvest regulation guidelines (HRG's) for tribal commercial fishers in 1836 Treaty waters.

Photo credit: Scott Koproski, USFWS

As dictated in the 2000 Consent Decree—a 20 year fishery allocation agreement for 1836 Treaty waters signed by the State of Michigan, United States, Bay Mills Indian Community, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, and Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians—the Modeling Subcommittee (MSC) of the Technical Fisheries Committee (TFC) annually collects data and conducts model runs to determine lake whitefish HRG's for 5 management units in northern Lake Huron. In 2002, the MSC identified fishery independent lake whitefish data as a critical information need. This survey meets the data need identified by the MSC.

Using the Alpena FRO 30' research vessel and staff, 24 overnight, variable mesh gill net sets were conducted at randomly selected sites in lake whitefish management unit 4 (Alpena to Presque Isle) and lake whitefish management unit 5 (Presque Isle to Hammond Bay). Twelve overnight, variable mesh gill net sets legged 3' off the bottom were also conducted. The Alpena FRO is evaluating whether these legged nets increase lake whitefish catch and decrease lake trout bycatch. All lake whitefish collected were measured for length, weighed, checked for lamprey wounds, sexed, and assessed for maturity and visceral fat content. Non-target fish species were worked up in a similar manner as well. We took scale and otolith samples from each lake whitefish for age determination and removed stomachs whole.

Preliminary analyses show that lake whitefish catch rates were similar between bottom-set and legged nets; however, lake trout catch rates were significantly lower in legged nets than in bottom sets. Similar to 2004, 2005 lake trout catch rates were lower than in 2002 and 2003 when this survey was executed from mid-May to mid-June. This survey will continue annually and be tailored to meet needs identified by the MSC. All data from this survey will be compiled, maintained, and analyzed at the Alpena FRO.

Data collected in this survey will improve the accuracy of population models used to set lake whitefish harvest guidelines in 1836 Treaty waters of northern Lake Huron. Harvest limits allow fisheries to be executed while still protecting the biological integrity of the stocks. This outcome is consistent with the Service's goal of maintaining self-sustaining populations of native fish species while meeting the needs of tribal communities under the "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management" and "Cooperation with Native Americans" priorities of the Fishery Program's Vision for the Future.

Aaron Woldt

Leadership in Science and Technology

Great Lakes Lake Sturgeon Tagging Database Web Portal Developed

During August, Anjanette Bowen developed a draft Internet portal website that contains Great Lakes lake sturgeon tagging data. The portal allows researchers to enter PIT tag numbers or external tag information recovered from lake sturgeon they have captured. The website processes the tag information within the tagging database and provides a list of contacts that have tagged or handled that particular sturgeon. The researcher can then use the contact information to report the catch or gather more information on the fish.

The Great Lakes Fishery Resources Offices (FROs) in Ashland and Green Bay, Wisconsin; Amherst, New York; and Alpena, Michigan have contributed their lake sturgeon tagging data and contact information for this initial draft version of the web portal. The portal will eventually house lake sturgeon tagging information from many agencies and areas around the Great Lakes as a definitive source of lake sturgeon tag information. The goal is to network researchers who are capturing lake sturgeon around the Great Lakes.

The tagging database and web portal were developed through a grant written by Alpena FRO Fishery Biologist Adam Kowalski and funded by the Great Lakes Fishery Trust. Information on

the site has been developed in conjunction and cooperation with the Great Lakes FRO lake sturgeon coordinators. The final version of the portal will be available in late 2005.

The Great Lakes Lake Sturgeon Tagging Database web portal will provide for inter- and intra-agency coordination of lake sturgeon tagging efforts around the Great Lakes. This project corresponds with the "Partnerships and Accountability", "Leadership in Science and Technology", and "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management" priorities of the Fishery Program's Vision for the Future.

Anjanette Bowen

Workforce Management

Alpena FRO discusses relocation with GSA

Alpena FRO Project Leader McClain met with General Services Administration (GSA) officials on August 24 to discuss possible relocation of offices to the lower floor of the Alpena Federal Building.

With the departure of NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary to new offices in Alpena, most the lower floor of the federal building will be left vacant. In recent years GSA has discussed the possibility of closing off the second floor currently occupied by the FRO and the U.S. Coast Guard if adequate space became available on the first floor. Closing off the upper floor would save operational costs and improve access to remaining tenants. In addition to a lack of accessibility, a number of safety deficiencies have been noted that would require costly retrofit.

McClain and GSA staff toured the vacant office space and discussed options for relocating the FRO. A decision is expected from GSA in late fall of 2005.

Relocation of the Alpena FRO to the lower floor of the federal building would improve environmental conditions for staff and alleviate safety issues that have remained unaddressed. This activity is consistent with the “Workforce Management” priority of the Service's Fishery Program Vision for the Future.

Jerry McClain

Alpena FRO Environmental Compliance and Safety Audit

On August 24 the Alpena FRO participated in an environmental compliance and safety audit of the facility. Patrick McDermott, Craig Nibbe, and John Hoffman from the Division of Safety, Health, and Environmental Compliance conducted the audit in cooperation with station Collateral Duty Safety Officer Bowen and Project Leader McClain.

Environmental compliance audits are required every 3 years and conducted by Regional Safety Office personnel. Safety and environmental compliance meet requirements under the "Workforce Management" priority of the Fishery Program's Vision for the Future.

Anjanette Bowen

Ashland MOCC Course

Motorboat Operator Certification Course (MOCC) instructors Stewart Cogswell (Green Bay FRO), Adam Kowalski (Alpena FRO), Aaron Woldt (Alpena FRO), Tim Peiffer (Marquette Biological Station), Dick Steinbach (Mark Twain NWR), Bob Clevenstine (Rock Island ESFO), Brian Pember (Upper Mississippi NWR), and Dave Wedan (LaCrosse FRO) put on a three day MOCC course in Ashland, WI from August 23 to 25, 2005. The MOCC course is designed to give operational and safety training to DOI employees that pilot DOI watercraft.

The following is a list topics covered during the course: surviving in the water, using floatation devices correctly, anchoring, required and recommended equipment for DOI vessels, changing a propeller, properly connecting a boat trailer to a vehicle, towing a trailer with a vehicle, USCG rules of the road, use of navigational aides, interpreting waves, tides, and weather, and proper boat handling.

Overall this course was a success, and all 18 students successfully completed the training. Students reported that they learned a great deal and felt that this course was a great starting point for learning to operate vessels.

MOCC training is a valuable curriculum designed to make Service personnel competent and safe boaters. Teaching MOCC courses is consistent with objective 7.2 of the "Workforce Management" priority of the Fishery Program's Vision for the Future.

Adam Kowalski